1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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583 *The Number of Cows given for Sul* (bride-price). The number varies
●604 from two to five, according to what competition there is for the girl's hand. 'When a man's wife dies, and the cows have not yet been handed over, they must be paid. If this is not done, the parents-in-law may not ask for them, but some day, when the dead woman's son is at his uncle's house to attend some ceremony, they will refuse to allow him to participate.' Again, should his mother's mother ever express the wish to have a 'room', i.e. a shrine in charge of her grandson, this shrine can only be built by his mother's brothers. They will refuse to do this and so compel the payment of the *sul*. This sanction is very typical.

583 The cows paid for a woman become the property of the head of her
768 house, not necessarily of her father. I asked if her mother got any, and was greeted with faces expressing almost consternation at the very thought of such a thing. 'She has been receiving five baskets of grain all the time from her son-in-law, why should she get any of the cows, and besides if my wife dies without a son, her relatives will come and claim all her property.' He added, 'Our ancestors too did not make a good law about a man (a clansman) getting our widows for nothing and any children we had by them.' As the heir may take them, this is not really any great hardship.

584 A marriage may be arranged by the parents when both the children
585 are quite young. When the boy reaches puberty, his father will tell
591 his elder brother, who is head of the compound, that the time has come for his son to marry. The father of the girl with whom the marriage has been arranged will make beer and call the senior 'father' of the youth and they will drink together. The father of the girl will then take his daughter's hand and give her to his friend, saying, 'There is your wife'. The 'father' of the youth then returns to his town, leaving the girl behind. A few days later, the girl is sent to his town accompanied by an old woman. She stays with the bridegroom's father's senior wife. A few days later, the 'father' of the bridegroom will send a member of his section with beer and a guinea-fowl to the bride's town, not to her 'father', but to the head of the section. This beer is to inform the spirits and the living about the marriage. It is called *sindan dam* (compare *sandono* in Nankanse marriage custom). Unless the *sindan* beer is given, the marriage is not considered legal; 'a man must cook this beer'. After the bride has spent three or four days at the bridegroom's compound, the boy's real father will tell his brother that he wishes to give the girl to his son. The senior wife

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of the head of the compound will, one evening, tell the bride to take fire (a faggot) to the bridegroom's hut in order that she may have light 'to sweep the floor', and she will add, 'you need not return'. Next morning people will know that the girl is So-and-so's wife. (I asked my informant if the youth for whom this marriage had been arranged knew all about it. He replied: 'The father of the youth would always be performing small services for his *dem* (in-laws), such, for example, as sending them fire-wood. The future bridegroom would be used as a messenger on such occasions and in this manner would get to know his future wife.') A man's senior 'father' is responsible for finding the cows for the bride-price (*sul*). If a man wants a second or third wife, he will help his father by giving some of his own cows, if he has got any by his own labours. 'If your father is too poor and your mother's brother is a rich man, he may pay for the cows for your wife, but that becomes a debt, for if you do not pay him back, he will claim your children after your death. You will pay him back by using the cows you receive for your own daughter.'

'A son-in-law will work on his *dem-pok's* ground-nut farm (*suma-pog*) once a year and help her in the sowing and harvest, and also assist his father-in-law in building. He will do all this until his wife bears him a child and then cease doing so, because then he will be looking out for a new wife and have then to work for these new in-laws. Every new harvest he will take new beer (*da'-palem*) and a guinea-fowl and go with his wife to visit his parents-in-law. On this occasion, the wife becomes like a man, by virtue of her husband, and gives the guinea-fowl as an offering to her father's spirit, or if he is alive, to his *Wen* (*Yini* shrine). If she were an unmarried girl at home, she could not do so. A son-in-law attends his parents-in-law's funeral, taking a sheep and goat and beer. He will also attend a brother-in-law's funeral taking a pot of beer "to pour on the grave" (*se yaug*). A son-in-law will also assist in digging a parent-in-law's grave, and even sleep at his village and resume digging next morning and dig out all the stones. When we dig a grave and come down to rock, we generally place an egg there, and fill in the hole, but when a man has many sons-in-law they will dig up the rock. As long as a man's wife has not borne a child, the son-in-law must send his mother-in-law five baskets of grain each new harvest. He stops doing so when she has a child, for after that they will at once demand payment of the *sul* (bride-price).'

'A man must respect his parents-in-law; if he offends them, he

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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562 in sacrifices to their lineage ancestors. When an important sacrifice is
793 due to be made to a lineage *bɔyar*, the married *pɔyayabəlis* of the lineage
769 who live near enough to be able to attend, and especially the senior *pɔyayabələg*, must be informed. Those who can, will attend the rite, and a prescribed portion (*tɔrəg*) of the animal sacrificed is the due of the *pɔyayabəlis*. This portion, consisting of the 'waist' (*sie*), i.e. part of the vertebral column and some of the ribs, together with prescribed bits of various internal organs and the intestines, is divided among the *pɔyayabəlis*, both married and unmarried, who are present. The allocation of a prescribed portion of a sacrificial animal to any group or individual is the most significant indication, in Tale culture, that that group or individual has a recognized formal status in the social structure.

428 An outstanding event in the life of a lineage is the inheritance (*vaagər*),
613 that is, the formal assumption of the custody, of a lineage *bɔyar* by a new
796 lineage head. Being old men generally, lineage heads seldom survive succession to this status for many years. Thus, the inheritance of a lineage *bɔyar* is an event of fairly frequent recurrence at periods varying
[182] from five to ten years. It is an occasion on which the integration of the lineage is at its maximum. Every member, male and female, who can do so makes an effort to attend. Those who are heads of families contribute fowls and flour to be added to the sacrifices on their behalf. All cognates by descent through women of the lineage who live near enough are invited, and those who are heads of families also bring contributions for the sacrifice. In short, the occasion is a sacrament in which all the descendants of the lineage ancestors, through both men and women, participate, and it is regarded as a particularly auspicious sacrament.

613 One of the first rites in the inheritance of a lineage *bɔyar* is the transfer
796 of the shrine from the homestead of its late custodian to that of his succes-
[787] sor. This rite is carried out by one male member of the segment whose head has become head of the
562 lineage, and one *pɔyayabələg* of the lineage, both selected by divination. Later, when many fowls brought by those present are sacrificed to the *bɔyar* to mark its transfer to a new lineage head, this pair are the first of the lineage members to present their offerings. Thus is symbolized the equality of status of men and women members of the lineage before the *bɔyar*, and the rights of women members and their descendants to the spiritual protection of the lineage ancestors.

●604 As we have seen in our consideration of attached lineages, and as
×618 we shall learn more fully when we examine the relations of maternal
587 uncle and sororal nephew,[1] there are circumstances in which descent through a woman is partially assimilated to the true agnatic line. To give only one example here, a sororal nephew (*ahəŋ*) of any degree whatsoever, that is, any member of another clan who has a cognatic link with the clan in question through an ancestress however remote, is formally equated with the sons of the clan in the matter of leviratic rights. An *ahəŋ* has the right to seek the hand of a widow of his maternal uncle's clan (*ahəb yiri*) on the same terms as a true member of that clan. He is, so to speak, exercising the right, corollary to the obligation of clan exogamy, that

[1] In *The Web of Kinship among the Tallensi*.

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might have been his mother's if she were a man. In practice sororal nephews are rarely allowed to assert this right, and then only if their cognatic link with their maternal uncle's clan is not more than about four generations back.

Though the *pɔyayabəlis* of a lineage or clan never act together as a single group, since marriage disperses them among other clans, they are often thought of as forming a united body, the feminine counterpart of the men of the clan. This is seen most conspicuously in funeral ceremonies; and we can easily understand why, if we remember that funeral ceremonies are the concern of the whole clan. We have made a passing reference to the role of *pɔyayabəlis* in funeral ceremonies, but it deserves some amplification. For it is in funeral ceremonies that one constantly hears 'the *pɔyayabəlis*' spoken of as if they were a regular, organized group, sees them called upon to undertake tasks in a purely representative capacity, and observes the allocation of prescribed portions of food to them as of right.

Naturally, this is most noticeable at the funeral of an important member of the lineage or the wife of a lineage elder. Large quantities of beer and food have to be prepared for distribution at various times during the ceremony, and this is the work of the women. All the women assisting in the work at the 'house of the funeral' (*koor yiri*) are divided into two groups, in a way which shows clearly the division of the women in whom a lineage or clan has jural and moral interests, into those who belong to the clan by birth and those who are married into it. The *pɔyayabəlis* form one group. They have separate cooking quarters, and special tasks. The other group consists of the *dubɛnib*, 'those who stay in the room'. They are the clanswomen of the wives of the bereaved house, who are themselves wives of other members of the clan or of nearby linked lineages or allied clans. They may include the *pɔyayabəlis* of several clans, except, of course, those of the clan celebrating the funeral. They, too, have their own cooking quarters and special duties and privileges. They are called *dubɛnib* (from *dug*, room, and *bɛ*, to stay or be) because they are identified with the *dugdɛm*, the 'mistresses of the rooms', that is, the wives of the bereaved clan who are their clan sisters. Their principal task is to remain indoors with their clan sisters in order to attend to their needs, to console them, and to help them in the duties that would fall upon wives in this situation. Clan sisterhood sometimes has a very wide connotation in these circumstances. There are many Wakii women married to Tongo men. If one of them requires the help of her clan sisters as *dubɛnib*, those of them who live nearest to her or are most closely related to her will be the first to come, and her distant clan sisters will probably not come at all. On the other hand, there are very few women of Hill Talis clans married to men at Duusi. So if one of them needs the help of *dubɛnib* she will call on all the women of Hill Talis clans at Duusi and in neighbouring settlements. In such a case the solidarity of clanship merges with that of locality and of common values. This principle is carried so far that if a Gore woman married to a Tenzugu man requires the help of *dubɛnib*, she calls upon all the other Gore wives, of whom there are very few, of Tenzugu and of immediately adjacent clans, whatever part of Goreland

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gift. Accepting the gift, the old man calls on his ancestors to bless his son-in-law and to forgive the offence. The beer is drunk by the elders of the father-in-law's clan segment. This ceremony should be performed before the child is old enough to visit its maternal grandparents. For if the child visits its mother's father's house before the pollution is erased and sets eyes—as inevitably it must—on the midden heap, where its placenta is buried, it will die. Instances are known of men who, defying convention and the ancestor spirits, have taken daughters from their husbands, owing to non-payment of bride-price, just before they were due to bear. Decent folk regard such behaviour as little short of monstrous, for it places mother and child in great danger, bereft as they are of the care and spiritual guardianship of the child's paternal kin and ancestors. It is for this reason, Tallensi say, that it is a taboo to demand a girl's bride-price while she is pregnant. Many a man wins a respite from his father-in-law's importunity on account of his wife's pregnancy.

The Significance of Maternal Parentage and the Uterine Line

The Tallensi, as we have seen, insist on the equal importance of both parents in the procreation of a child. Though patrilineal descent is overwhelmingly dominant in the jural, economic, and ritual constitution of Tale society, it would be surprising if maternal origin had no institutional function in Tale social organization and ideology. In fact, as has been shown in our analysis of the lineage system,[1] the two principles of patrilineal descent and maternal origin always work together. The two ideas are inseparable in native thought and run like a cry and its echo through the whole social structure. Whenever I have discussed these matters with informants they have generally begun by enumerating all the things that make 'paternal parentage (*ba dɔŋam*)' the most important fact of one's life, and have usually concluded by pointing out that, of course, 'maternal parentage (*ma dɔŋam*)' is also of the greatest importance, though in a different way.

One indication of the sociological significance of maternal origin is the quality of the bond between mother's brother (*ahɔb*) and sister's son (*ahɔŋ*), either of the first degree or in a classificatory sense.[2] A person's own maternal uncle and maternal grandfather (*yaab*), and their inner lineage (*dug*), impinge directly and frequently on his life. The maternal uncle's home is a person's second home. He has a quasi-filial status there; and in addition to close bonds of sentiment with his uncle and his uncle's close kin, he has specific ceremonial rights and duties in relation to them. Though he has no property, succession, or inheritance rights in his uncle's home, a man has special material privileges there, which give expression to the notion of his quasi-filial status. They show that he is equated with a son in sentiment while

[1] See *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iii.
[2] Cf. ch. xi, below.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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strictly differentiated from a son in jural terms. The kinship tie between sister's son and mother's brother is an important breach in the genealogical fence enclosing the agnatic lineage; it is one of the main gateways of an individual's social relations with members of other clans than his own.

But the recognition accorded to the mother's agnatic kin does not bring out the deeper implications of maternal origin as the complementary of paternal origin. These implications are contained in the concept *soog* (pl. *saarət* or *soorət*). This concept involves the idea of matrilineal descent in contrast to that of patrilineal descent. Both in its range of efficacy, its mode of operation, its jural and ritual value, and its emotional and sentimental connotation, matrilineal descent stands in contrast to patriliny.

For obvious physiological reasons the bond of consanguinity with one's mother is unique and unalterable; and it is a peculiarly personal bond. The fact that one's jural status is not derived from one's mother serves to emphasize the personal nature of this bond. A person's mother may desert his father and leave him to be reared (*ugh*) by another woman; he may feel some resentment over this all his life; but she remains his true mother, 'the mother who bore him (*ma dɔɣarug*)'. Nothing can alter this fact or extinguish the kinship ties that arise from it.

We postpone for a later chapter a consideration of the emotional ties of mother and child. The concept *soog* has definite emotional implications; but here we are concerned with its implications for the social structure. *Soog* means a bond of consanguinity which excludes completely any reckoning with lineage affiliation. People who are *saarət* define themselves biologically as 'the offspring of one womb'—or, in the actual phraseology of the natives, 'to have come from one vagina (*yi pɛn yɛni*)'. This is the common way of stating it; occasionally, but far less commonly, one hears people defining themselves as patrilineally related by the corresponding phrase 'to be the children of one penis (*woor yɛni biis*)'.

Saarət, therefore, are uterine kin. Between mother and child there is a uterine bond corresponding to the agnatic bond between father and child; and children of one woman are *saarət*, irrespective of their paternity. A woman may have children by different men of the same clan, or of different clans; they are *saarət*, irrespective of their clan affiliations.

Soog is more than the bond of personal kinship between mother and child, and between siblings by the same mother. It is the bond of uterine descent perpetuated through the female line in the same way as the bond of agnatic descent is transmitted through the male line. Uterine siblings are *saarət*; uterine sisters' children are *saarət* (but not uterine brothers' children, for the children of men are not their father's *saarət*); uterine female cousins' children are *saarət*; and so on,

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also an *ahɔŋ* of Sie and of Tɔŋ Kuorəg because other patrilineal ancestors of his were *ahɔs* of those clans. But when he was explaining his various ancestor shrines to me he accounted for his possession of one on the grounds of his being a *yaaŋ* of Sɔk—his patrilineal great-great-grandfather's mother's mother having been a daughter of Sɔk; and for another on the ground of his being an Arogo *yaaŋ*, since his mother's mother's mother came from Arogo. The distinction between *ahɔŋ* and *yaaŋ* in this sense implies corresponding differences in social relations. It follows, as can easily be seen, from combining the principle of lineage continuity with that of sibling equivalence.

Our analysis shows that the extension and transference of extra-clan kinship ties through the social system is not an indiscriminate lumping together of classes or groups of relatives. It is strictly regulated by the basic principles on which that system is built up. We must not forget, however, that the majority of these derivative social ties are only potential. The more distant or indirect they are the less frequently and the less effectively do they emerge in the form of actual social relations. We shall come back to this presently.

The diagram overleaf summarizes the results of the preceding analysis.

The Nuclear Relationship of Mother's Brother and Sister's Son

All extra-clan kinship ties, except those of uterine kin, are rooted in the relationship of mother's brother and sister's child. We proceed now to study this relationship in greater detail.[1]

Tallensi say that a mother's brother is a 'sort of father (*u ŋman ni i ba*—lit. he is like your father)', and a sister's child is 'like your own child (*u ŋman ni i bii*)'. These expressions conjure up, to the native, a picture of a personal and lifelong mutual interest and attachment similar to that of parent and child. How deeply it goes depends on the character and disposition of the individuals concerned, but it is always there. In part it is no more than a continuation of the interest a woman's close lineage kin have in her children, but it has distinctive features of its own and is counted of more value and importance than a maternal grandparent's interest in a daughter's children.

When a girl becomes pregnant for the first time her husband sends a message to her parents. Later, about the fourth or fifth month of her pregnancy, her mother sends one of her close co-wives to bind the girl with a perineal band (*tuol voog*). This is a proud moment for her, as the perineal band shows her to have left maidenhood behind and to have entered the ranks of the matrons (*pɔɣaŋaay*, pl. *pɔɣaŋaas*). Then, before

[1] The starting-point of this analysis is Radcliffe-Brown's theory of the social equivalence of the mother's brother to his sister in relation to her children, first expounded in his article 'The Mother's Brother in South Africa', loc. cit. 'Sister's son' in this chapter stands for 'sister's child of either sex', except when the context shows that a male is meant.

[Text continued on p. 301. ANALYST]

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the child is due, her husband sends a sacrifice for her spirit guardian to her father, to secure the blessing of her patrilineal ancestors on the ordeal she is soon to undergo. When the child is born, a messenger is again dispatched to announce its birth to the girl's parents. He is received with the hospitality due to a bearer of particularly glad tidings. Now the girl's mother sends her four new calabashes. These are the infant's toilet-vessels—one for giving the infant its daily medicated water to drink, one as a dipper for use when bathing it, one as a slop basin, one for scooping up its excrement. These private toilet utensils are in part a magical protection for the baby. The occasion is also marked, as we have learnt, by a special gift of foodstuffs to the new mother from her father. All these formalities are not necessary for children after the first; it is enough to send a message on the birth of the child. But the woman's paternal relatives are no less interested in these later children than in her first child.

A child makes the acquaintance of its mother's paternal family very early in life. Its mother's sisters and mother's mother, if she is not too old, are frequent visitors to its mother. Its mother's brothers may be frequent visitors too, especially if they are on friendly terms with its father. But it is not till the child reaches the age of about 5 or 6, when it begins to be taken on visits to its *ahəb yiri*, that it clearly distinguishes these relatives. The person who matters most to a small child at its mother's brother's house is its maternal grandmother (*ma-kpeem*), in whose quarters and under whose care the child lives.[1] Old people, both men and women, love to have their daughters' young children to stay with them, and pet and spoil them quite as much as their sons' children. As will be remembered, grandchildren joke with their maternal grandparents. At harvest time, in particular, old women often have daughters' children to stay for a week or two, so that they can enjoy the good food available at that time. Playing and eating and sleeping with the children of the house, a child learns to regard them as siblings, and partly through imitating them, partly through coming directly under the discipline of his mother's brother, a child thus visiting its *ahəb yiri* learns to think of its *ahəb* as a 'sort of father'. He hears all the gossip of the family. When a domestic sacrifice is performed he is present and receives the portion of the animal—the neck (*nangoor*)—prescribed for an *ahəŋ*. I have more than once seen a small boy of perhaps 8 receive the neck of a sacrifice, amid an amused chuckle from his mother's brothers. If a woman dies leaving a young child of less than 5 or 6 years old it is a common thing for the child to be sent to live with its maternal grandmother for a year or two until it is old enough to need only a minimum of maternal care.

Thus, a child learns to think of its *ahəb yiri*, in the strict sense of its mother's brother's homestead, at first, in the more extended sense, later, as a place where it is given food, shelter, affectionate attention, and

[1] This follows directly from the constitution of the joint family.

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status in almost the same way as in its own home. It is not surprising to find that most Tallensi know almost as much about the affairs of their mother's brother's family as they do about their own family, and that they often have a very good knowledge of the distinctive ritual practices and ideas of their mother's brother's clan. For though a sister's child is not admitted to the esoteric ritual ceremonies of his maternal kinsmen's clan, he often hears them discuss the less sacred aspects of these ceremonies and takes part in the domestic rites that are interspersed with them.

A great attachment may thus grow up between mother's brother and sister's child, in particular, the sister's son. This is especially the case when *ahəb* and *ahəŋ* are uterine kin (*saarət*), that is when the mother's brother is the full brother of the mother of the *ahəŋ*. The sentiments and attitudes a person has towards his mother are extended in a modified form towards her brother, and the latter extends to the sister's child the attachment he has to his sister. When I first met Barimoda at Baŋgam-Teroog's house the latter said, pointing to Barimoda, 'This is my child (*m-biig nla*).' Knowing that Barimoda and Teroog belonged to different clans, I demurred. Whereupon Teroog said: 'He is my full (*soog*) sister's son; and if you and your *soog* sister together have a child, is he not your child too? (*N ta-soog biig n-a-u; ka nyɛn ni i ta-soog n-kab dɔya bii, daya i biiga?*).' Barimoda was as much at home in Teroog's house as in his own. Seldom a day passed without his visiting the old man. Since Teroog's only adult son lived far away, Barimoda did for him many of the things a son would have done. He enlisted the help of his brother's sons to get Teroog's small home farm hoed and was his counsellor in all his problems, as sons usually are to a father enfeebled with years. Being an old man and head of his lineage, Teroog very often had to make sacrifices to his ancestors. On these occasions he always sent for Barimoda. Once, through a trifling disagreement with Teroog's younger wife, Barimoda refused to attend a sacrifice at Teroog's house. Naabdiya, Barimoda's half-brother and a friend of Teroog's, and I happened to be present. After the sacrifice Teroog offered the neck of the goat sacrificed to Naabdiya. Another man, able, like Naabdiya, to claim a distant matrilateral connexion with Teroog's clan, would have considered himself a 'sister's son' in this situation and have accepted the prescribed portion. But Naabdiya refused. No, he said, everybody knew that Barimoda was Teroog's favourite *ahəŋ* and always came to such sacrifices. If he, Naabdiya, now accepted the sister's son's portion Barimoda would resent it. In a few days his sulky mood would pass and he would resume his usual relations with Teroog. Teroog agreed and added that he would send the goat's neck to Barimoda with a conciliatory message. Everybody in Zubiuŋ knew of Barimoda's devotion to his *ahəb-soog* and spoke highly of him for this. So when Teroog's son died and he insisted that Barimoda should be allowed to inherit

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one of the widows, it met with general approval among the men of Zubiuŋ.

The relationship of Kpɛlimɛrəme and his mother's full brother Kuur was similar. One incident may be quoted as a particularly forcible illustration of the intimacy and attachment that often exist between *ahəb* and *ahəŋ*. Kuur was suffering from a very painful and repulsive skin disease which had finally attacked his genitals, turning them into a disgusting, ulcerated area. When Lɔyani, Kuur's younger paternal brother, came to ask me for some medicine to treat this sickness, he said that the mere sight of it made him vomit—and, as he remarked, he was known to be a man of stout heart (*suhkpeemərdaan*) in dealing with sickness or death. I gave Lɔyani some disinfectant, and advised cleansing and bathing the affected parts with it. Lɔyani looked dubious and then explained that Kuur was in too great pain to carry out the treatment himself, Kuur's children were all too young to do it, and his disease was so revolting that none of his more distant relatives would undertake the task. Then an idea struck him. There was someone who would do it—Kpɛlimɛrəme. And in fact Kpɛlimɛrəme did undertake the unpleasant task and performed it faithfully for several weeks. 'Do you think,' said Kpɛlimɛrəme to me, 'I would let my *ahəb* die if I knew of any way of saving him?'

Such a relationship is common between sister's son and mother's full brother. As a rule there is not such great intimacy and devotion between a man and his half-sister's son. It is, however, only a matter of degree. Ɔmara was very attached to his half-sister's children, especially to her eldest daughter. He was as proud of her marriage to the Chief of Bongo as her own father was. Yɛanbɔrigya, like most Tallensi, was a constant visitor to his *ahəb* at Samiit. Once at a public sacrifice at which he was the only non-member of Samiit present, his mother's brother's clansmen teased him saying that he might as well come and join them for good. Anyhow, they chaffed him, he was really a son of Samiit since his mother's bride-price had not been fully paid.[1] He rejoined, jokingly, that he belonged both to Samiit and to his own clan.

As a rule, too, a sister's daughters do not after marriage have such constant and close contacts with their mother's brother's people as a sister's sons. Any interest a woman has in relatives other than her husband's people is chiefly directed towards her parental family, and she keeps in touch with her mother's brother's people through her mother and brothers. A woman lacks the bond of common interests due to identity of sex that reinforces the ties of mother's brother and sister's son. A woman also has no need to maintain ritual relations with her

[1] If a woman dies leaving adult sons before the fourth cow of her bride-price is claimed, her paternal kin are normally obliged to waive it in favour of her sons. This is interpreted as a sign of their quasi-parental interest in the sons' welfare and marriages.

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ahəb. Nevertheless she has much the same attitude to him as her brothers have and will, if need arises, go to him for help as if he were her father. A woman will go to her mother's brother for a basket of grain at harvest time if her husband's grain supplies are very low and she knows that her father or brother has none to spare.

These personal bonds are transferred, in accordance with the principles we have previously made clear, to sons and grandsons and collateral relatives, as well as to the lineages, of *ahəb* and *ahəŋ*. Yarəg of Gbizug was a close friend of his paternal grandfather's mother's brother's family at Puhug. Sayəbazaa, who was both a neighbour and a distant classificatory *ahəŋ* of Zubiuŋ (since both the founding ancestor of his maximal lineage and one of his inner lineage forbears were sister's sons of a Zubiuŋ lineage), took great pride in being the *ahəŋ-kpeem*, most senior of the 'sisters' sons' of that clan. He took a keen interest in its affairs and never missed attending important ceremonies anywhere in Zubiuŋ. The elders of the clan spoke of him with respect as 'our elder brother (*ti bier*)'. But naturally, the more distant the relationship is, the less intimate and the more formal do the mutual interests of *ahəb* and *ahəŋ* tend to become.

Death is the key test of kinship sentiments. The day after Kpe'emi's death I happened to call at the house of his mother's full brother, Ləyani. I found Ləyani and his brother sitting listlessly at their gateway and the house was as quiet as if there were a person on his death-bed inside. The women, who should have been out collecting firewood, were at home, and the children, usually playing boisterously at that time of the day, sat in corners, talking in subdued voices. When I asked what was the matter, Ləyani said mournfully, 'Have you not heard of our child Kpe'emi's death? That is our grief (*ti suhkpcləg nla*). We sitting here, our bodies are prostrate (*ti nɛŋgbina nkpi*—lit. our bodies are dead). We have no thought for food or drink or work.' Barimoda was deeply affected when his *ahəb* Teroog died, though he was then a very old man. Barimoda could not publicly manage the funeral but he did in fact manage it behind the scenes. As we shall see later, an *ahəŋ* has certain customary obligations to fulfil at the funeral of his *ahəb*. The feud between the Gəlibdaana's faction and the Kpata'arna'ab's supporters at Tɛnzugu placed many men in the camp opposed to that of their *ahəb* or *ahəs*. Kpata'ar men and Bunkyiuk men stopped having any contacts with each other. But just then the mother's brother of Nayabil of Kpata'ar died. I was with the Kpata'arna'ab, the head of the maximal lineage, when Nayabil came to tell him of this. 'I want to tell you', he said, 'because he (the dead man) is my true *ahəb* (i.e. mother's full brother) and if I do not go to the funeral to mourn his death it would be unseemly (*de ku maali*). Besides', he went on, turning to me, 'if I don't go my mother (also dead) would be angry because I was scorning her brother's funeral.' The Kpata'arna'ab at once gave Nayabil permis-

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sion to go, saying that the quarrel between the two clans had nothing to do with the question of personal kinship ties. As this example shows, there is a strong element of moral (but not jural) compulsion in the respect owed by a sister's son to his mother's brother, and the sanction behind it is the allegiance every man owes to his maternal ancestors.

On the level of sentiment and affective attitudes there is clearly a close resemblance between the relationship of mother's brother and sister's child and that of father and child. The difference, and it is a fundamental difference, lies in the fact that *ahəb* and *ahəŋ* have no common economic or jural interests. Thus a man can be familiar with all the affairs of his *ahəb* or *ahəŋ* and be keenly concerned that they should go well, but he is under no responsibility for their satisfactory outcome. The tension underlying the relationship of father and son is absent, and in this important respect the relationship of *ahəb* and *ahəŋ* resembles that of mother and child more closely. An *ahəb* must be respected by and he has considerable moral authority over his *ahəŋ*; but he cannot demand obedience from him as of right. This will be clearer from what follows.

Here it is pertinent to ask why the mother's brother and not her father—though he is the head of her natal family—holds the key position in the network of social relations that bind a person to his mother's patrilineal kin. As our analysis makes clear, it follows from the interaction of the principle of the equivalence of siblings and the principle of the cleavage between successive generations. A person cannot identify himself with his mother in relation to her father. He cannot have the status of a son and the status of a grandson in relation to the same person. On the other hand, as the preceding discussion makes clear, it is in conformity both with the logic of the social structure and with the pattern of sentiments uniting parent and child, for a person to extend to his mother's brother the filial attitude he has towards his mother. He can consistently be his mother's son and at the same time have a quasi-filial status in relation to her brother.

The Place of Gifts in the Relations of Ahəb and Ahəŋ

An *ahəb* demonstrates his interest in his sister's son's well-being by the gifts (*piimi*) he occasionally gives him. The theory is that they are given freely out of kinship amity. By the rule of reciprocity there should be a similar freely-given flow of gifts and services from *ahəŋ* to *ahəb*, but the emphasis lies on the generosity of the *ahəb*. A man is under no jural or ritual obligation to give things to his sister's child; he does so voluntarily as a quasi-paternal gesture. And though an *ahəŋ* has no property rights in the lineage or clan of his *ahəb*, he is, in theory, allowed certain liberties with things belonging to them, as if he were a kind of son of the clan. This is explained by the formula that but for the accident of

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604 431 birth his mother might have been an owner of these things. In the past, when people moved about less freely than now, a man passing through the clan settlement of his *ahəb* could seize any guinea-fowl he saw and collect any guinea-fowl eggs he came across[1] irrespective of which member of his mother's brother's clan they belonged to. Nowadays this custom is objected to. Tallensi say that with people moving about so freely and frequently as they do now, it would soon lead to the destruction of all their flocks of guinea-fowl. But an *ahəŋ* is still at liberty to cut himself a few heads of guinea corn or millet from any farm when walking through the settlement of his *ahəb*, if he is feeling hungry.

Women *ahəs* have an analogous privilege of much more practical value. As we have learnt, if a woman has a small baby she often gets a young sister of her own inner lineage or clan to come and live with her and be the infant's nursemaid. If there is no suitable girl in her father's lineage, she is entitled to ask her *ahəb* or her father's *ahəb* to give her a little girl. This is a very common practice.

604 426 Sister's son and mother's brother cannot contract debts towards each other. If a man borrows money or livestock from an *ahəb* or *ahəŋ* repayment cannot be demanded. It rests with the borrower to make an equivalent return in due course. Ɔndieso provided an amusing illustration of this rule. He borrowed three shillings from Naambulɔg, a member of the lineage of his paternal grandfather's *ahəb*, and a friend of his. For about a year nothing was said about this loan and the friendship of the two men continued as before. Then a disagreement developed between Kutɔbis, head of Ɔndieso's inner lineage, and the head of Naambulɔg's clan, for which the latter was in part responsible. As it was a question of a right vested in the inner lineage, Ɔndieso supported and indeed instigated Kutɔbis. He was particularly angry with Naambulɔg. Thereupon the latter immediately demanded repayment of the loan, thus symbolically relegating Ɔndieso to the class of non-relatives, and Ɔndieso ostentatiously repaid two shillings. Repaying Naambulɔg in kind, he had deducted one shilling for two fowls Naambulɔg had borrowed from his brother two or three years previously.

604 431 When Bontuya died his son Ba'andoog had to sacrifice a white bull to the dead man's *Yin* shrine before starting the funeral ceremonies. Ba'andoog went to his father's sister's son, who, he knew, had a white bull, and asked for the animal. Very reluctantly the *ahəŋ* parted with his bull. As he explained to me afterwards, it was a very fine young bull. 'But', he said, 'Bontuya begot me and I have no power to refuse him anything.' Several months later the father-in-law of the *ahəŋ* came to him demanding a cow of his daughter's bride-price. The young man promptly went

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[1] Guinea-fowl are only semi-domestic birds. They live out of doors and are very difficult to catch alive. They also lay their eggs out of doors. The privilege of an *ahəŋ* therefore had more of a token value than any practical worth. But I know several men who claim to have used their privilege at least once.

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to his mother's brother's house and Ba'andoog gave him a cow of somewhat greater value than the white bull to give to his father-in-law. But such exchanges are exceptional. A fowl, a sixpence, a slab of tobacco, a few kola nuts, these are the more usual kinds of gifts that pass between extra-clan kin.

There are two gifts from a mother's brother to which great significance is attached. One of these is the gift of a hen to a lad from his *ahəb* when he becomes capable of productive labour. This is almost a universal custom among the Tallensi. As we have shown in an earlier chapter, its importance lies in that it marks the beginning of the economic (and, therefore, in due course, social) self-differentiation of a boy within the joint family. It symbolizes, and in many cases actually serves as, the starting-point of the accumulation of wealth by individual effort. It was the proud boast of Barimoda that starting as a small boy with a fowl given to him by his father's *ahəb* he had eventually 'achieved' (*paa*) a cow from which he had had several calves. In every settlement one can find two or three men who have matched this achievement, but it is more common to find men who have 'achieved' a goat or a sheep in this way. And though Tallensi always speak as if they began with one hen this is not strictly true. A boy may receive fowls from two or three matrilateral kinsmen, and he may be given more than one fowl by an *ahəb* who is specially attached to him. Koyatee was unlucky with the first hen his true mother's brother gave him. When it died he told his *ahəb*, who gave him another. He successfully bred a brood of chickens from this hen and was given yet another hen by the same mother's brother.

An *ahəb* has no claims on livestock bred in this way by his sister's son. Very often, if a man needs a fowl for a sacrifice and has none that is suitable, he will send to ask his sister's son for one; but this is not connected with the gift of a hen he may have made to the latter many years before. The equivalent return for the mother's brother's hen is made in another way. As has been previously mentioned, when a man 'achieves' a cow, after starting with his mother's brother's hen, he owes this cow to his mother's brother's lineage ancestor shrine (*bəyar*). He keeps the cow until it is too old to calve and then takes it to his mother's brother's lineage as a thank-offering to his maternal ancestors. For, say the natives, it must surely have been their beneficence that gave him prosperity, since the hen came from their son.

Far more important is the gift of land by an *ahəb* to an *ahəŋ*. There are degrees of finality about such a gift. It is a very common practice for both men and women to beg a plot of land from an *ahəb*—or any other extra-clan matrilateral kinsman—living in an adjacent settlement to plant with ground-nuts or sweet potatoes. The land given for these purposes generally lies on the outskirts of the donor's settlement, near that of the recipient. As often as not, it is land too exhausted for grain crops; or else it is land not required by the *ahəb* that season. Use of the land

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is granted for one season only, but the *ahəŋ* is often allowed to retain it for several years with the tacit understanding that it must be surrendered whenever the donor asks for it, as he will do a season in advance when he wishes to resume cultivation of it. The gift is made without any special ceremony and the recipient pays no rent. If he gets a good crop he usually gives his *ahəb* a basket of ground-nuts or sweet potatoes as a token of gratitude. But this is entirely optional. A person may borrow a ground-nut plot in the same way from a uterine or other matrilateral or sororal kinsman in his or her own clan and the same rules apply. Women also borrow plots for ground-nuts from their own kinsmen belonging to their husbands' clans. This practice is so common that it can be described as the normal thing for young men, especially if they are unmarried and farming with their fathers. Nor is it shortage of land that makes young men ask an *ahəb* for a ground-nut plot rather than their fathers. Nayabaal, Nalɛbseug, and Mosuor, all youths aged between 15 and 20, had borrowed ground-nut and sweet potato plots from their mothers' brothers' people, but the fathers of all three had ample land. Indeed Nayabaal's father allowed two of his *ahəs* to grow ground-nuts on a distant piece of fallow land belonging to him. A strong motive is the knowledge that a youth's father will, as a rule, not interfere with the manner in which the youth may wish to dispose of a crop grown on his mother's brother's land as he might if it were grown on land belonging to the nuclear lineage. There is always the feeling that anything obtained through the use of lineage resources must be at the disposal of the whole domestic group if it is required. Thus borrowing a ground-nut plot from one's mother's brother reflects the association we have previously stressed of individual self-differentiation in economic and social terms with maternal origin. But there is also a more important jural reason. A man cannot refuse his son or brother's son if the latter asks for some land to use for himself and the father has spare land. But then he cannot take possession of the land again without very good reason. The result is that if a man obtains a plot of land from his father or the head of his nuclear lineage for growing ground-nuts he tends, in due course, to establish *de facto* possessory rights over it and it never reverts to the patrimonial land. Unless, therefore, a man wishes deliberately to endow a son or brother's son with land, to be held in perpetuity by the latter's agnatic descendants, he prefers not to grant such a dependant a plot for his private use. He cannot make such a grant to one son or brother's son only; he would have to give similar plots to his other sons and proxy sons. Resort to matrilateral kin avoids this dilemma.

This arises also in the more serious business of borrowing land to cultivate as a regular bush-farm for a period of years. A man who wants a new bush-farm commonly tries to get one from a matrilateral or sororal kinsman or lineage. It is very rare for land to be borrowed from a clansman who is not also a matrilateral or sororal kinsman, for permanent

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cultivation. It is felt to be incompatible with clanship ties. Clansmen form a corporate unit, in theory made up of a vastly expanded group of brothers. In theory, every member of a clan or maximal lineage has an interest in and a potential right to inherit the property of any other member of the clan. Hence if a lineage segment dies out all the land formerly owned by its members passes into the ownership of the next higher lineage of which it forms a segment, and is vested in the head of that lineage. Thus if a man were to lend land for permanent farming to a clansman he would never be able to demand its return. The lender, moreover, would not give the land with that feeling of personal interest in the recipient's welfare and desire for his prosperity that an *ahəb* has towards his sister's son or an *ahəŋ* towards his mother's brother. A matrilateral kinsman gives freely, solely out of consideration for the needs of his kinsman, not because the latter has a right to what he asks for; and the spirit in which the gift is made carries with it the blessings of the giver's ancestors. There is an advantage to the giver in that what is voluntarily given can be taken back without affecting the relationship of the parties, and an advantage to the recipient in that restoring the borrowed land to its owner does not mean a surrender of a right.

I have recorded the ownership of a large number of bush-farms. They fall into three approximately equal groups: those which are said to have belonged to the lineage from time immemorial; those which it is claimed were bought by an ancestor; and those which, it is said, were obtained by an ancestor by gift from a mother's brother or other matrilateral kinsman. The latter explanation is so common and so stereotyped that it may well be mythical in many cases. But cross-checking and the fact that such gifts are still commonly made show that the claim is true for most cases. I witnessed the whole procedure twice, when two men well known to me obtained gifts of bush-farms from matrilateral kinsmen. Ɔmara, a Zoo man, obtained his from the head of the inner lineage at Zubiuŋ to which his paternal great-grandfather's *ahəb* had belonged; and Sombura from Ba'ari obtained his from his paternal grandfather's mother's brother's lineage at Tongo. These cases are the more significant in that it has been the practice, for several generations, for Tongo people to get land from their matrilateral kinsmen at Zoo, and for Ba'ari people to resort to their kinsmen at Yayazoor for grants of bush-farms.

The procedure is as follows. A man looking for a new bush-farm sees a suitable piece of land which he knows belongs to his true or to a classificatory mother's brother's lineage (*ahəb yidɛm*). He ascertains that it has not been cultivated for the last ten or fifteen years, which suggests that the owners are not hard pressed for land. He then goes to 'beg' (*soh*) the land from his *ahəb yidɛm*. The land Ɔmara desired belonged to his lineage *ahəb*[1] Dawoog's inner lineage; and partly for this reason,

[1] i.e. the progenitrix of Ɔmara's medial lineage had been a daughter of Dawoog's inner lineage.

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partly because Ɔmara's relationship was with the whole inner lineage, not with Dawoog personally, the request had to be placed before the assembled elders of the inner lineage. The land could not have been granted without their unanimous consent. This having been obtained, a day was fixed for handing over the land. Early in the morning of the appointed day Ɔmara, followed by his oldest son, arrived bringing a fowl and a guinea-fowl and a large basket of guinea corn. Dawoog then summoned all the men of his inner lineage, and proceeded to sacrifice the birds to his lineage ancestors at the lineage *bɔyar*. Addressing the ancestors he explained all the circumstances of their 'grandson' Ɔmara's request and exhorted them to bless his labour and to grant that the new farm might bring him prosperity. It was a long prayer detailing exactly how Ɔmara was related to Dawoog's lineage and promising that he would bring further offerings in gratitude to the *bɔyar* whenever the new farm produced good crops. The flesh of the birds was divided amongst all present, including Ɔmara, in accordance with the customary rules.

Ɔmara and his son, accompanied by two young men and an elder of the *ahɔb yiri* deputed by Dawoog, then repaired to the bush-farm. The elder showed Ɔmara the boundaries of the farm and the young men hoed a strip along one boundary to symbolize marking them out (*kyie*). They then set to, with the aid of Ɔmara and his sons, to hoe a small patch, and so symbolically to hand over the right of working the farm. This was symbolized, also, in a simple rite in which the elder handed Ɔmara a large pellet of soil from the farm, mixed with a handful of the flour used in the sacrifice to the *bɔyar*, to eat.

The procedure was identical in the case of Sɔmbura, with one exception. The land belonged to his *ahɔb* Sayamane's nuclear lineage, so there was no need to obtain the consent of the elders of his inner lineage. Sayamane did, however, inform them because, as he put it, 'you cannot undertake so important a transaction without the knowledge of your "brothers" and "fathers", and besides, telling them makes them witnesses to the act'. It means that there will always be some member of the inner lineage who knows the circumstances and conditions of the gift.

Tallensi attach very great importance to the ritual steps in this transaction. They secure the blessing of his matrilateral ancestors for the recipient of the land. Without this, they believe, failure and even disaster would overtake him when he starts farming the new bush-farm; for, they say, the land really belongs to the ancestors who first cultivated it. Moreover, the ritual formalities also have an explicitly stressed jural function. It is a solemn covenant between the parties, made in the presence of the ancestors, in which all those who have rights in the land avow their consent to the gift and the recipient pledges himself to abide by the implicit conditions of the tenure of the land. The arrangement

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has the sanctions of the ancestor cult behind it, and the guarantee of having been made with the public consent of all who have an interest in the land.

The recipient pays no rent or dues for the land. During the first three or four years he must give a basket of guinea corn or millet to the grantors after every harvest. If he has had good crops it will be a large basketful; if he has had a poor season it will be a small basket. In subsequent years he need only bring a gift of grain if his crops are good and if he wishes to do so. Some of this grain will be ground into flour and a libation poured to his matrilateral ancestors at their *bɔyar*, expressing thanks for their beneficence. This serves also to reaffirm the ownership of the land by the grantors. Occasionally, too, he may bring a fowl to offer at the ancestral *bɔyar* of his *ahəb* lineage in gratitude for the beneficence of the ancestors whose land he is working.

In principle, the lineage that grants the land can recover use of it at any time by giving the recipient a year's notice. But this right would only be exercised, in practice, if the latter offends them in any way—for instance, by withholding the gifts of grain in spite of having excellent crops. As a rule, therefore, the *ahɔŋ* retains the use of the land until he no longer requires it. It then reverts automatically to its proper owners. If the original recipient dies, his son may continue to use the land without specially renewing the arrangement with his *ahəb yidɛm*.

Now supposing the farm is so large that the recipient need not cultivate all of it at one time. By cultivating and fallowing different portions of the farm in rotation he and his sons after him may keep it in use continually. If this goes on for two generations, by which time all the individuals who were present in person at the original transaction are probably dead, the land passes into the effective ownership of the original recipient's lineage, in the third generation. The successors of the original grantor no longer have the right of recovering the land but they are still the nominal owners of the land. If it is wholly abandoned they may resume occupation; the users may not sell the land; and if they grossly offend the nominal owners, the latter can, in theory, turn them off it.

This right is most emphatically claimed, though it is, by all accounts, very rarely exercised. An incident concerning Ɔndieso is suggestive of what might happen. Ɔndieso quarrelled with his neighbour and the head of his paternal grandfather's mother's brother's lineage, the Gbizug Tɛndaana. The latter, in his anger, ordered Ɔndieso to leave the land he was farming. This land had been given to Ɔndieso's grandfather by his mother's brother, the then Gbizug Tɛndaana. Ɔndieso, previously defiant, was filled with dismay. Not to comply with the tɛndaana's demand meant risking both the wrath of his matrilateral ancestors and the vengeance of the Earth whose cult is so closely bound up with Gbizug. So he went across to Deemzeet, the head of Ɲuhug section of

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Tongo and therefore the senior lineage head of all Tongo, and begged him to intercede. As Deemzeeŧ was also the head of the Gbizug Tɛndaana's grandfather's mother's brother's lineage, the choice was doubly fortunate. Deemzeet thereupon sent two of his sons to plead with the tɛndaana, who consented to withdraw his demand if Ɔndieso would bring a fowl and a guinea-fowl to sacrifice to the ancestor who had originally made the gift of the land, in sign of contrition.

Though Ɔndieso climbed down for fear of mystical retribution, both he and others maintained that the tɛndaana had exceeded his rights. The land Ɔndieso's grandfather had been given was no longer a bush-farm. Ɔndieso's father's brother had been given leave to build on it and the homestead had stood there for two generations. This, they considered, gave Ɔndieso a title amounting to complete ownership of the land. Had his *ahɔb* been an ordinary person and not a tɛndaana, whose ritual position gives his fulminations the force of a curse, Ɔndieso could have ignored his demand.

It has always been and still is a frequent practice for men to solicit a site for a homestead and a piece of land to make a home farm, from a matrilateral kinsman, if they wish to set up an independent homestead. As we have recorded in our earlier book, this is how many Tongo people have come to live at Zoo and this is how many immigrants into the peripheral settlements find sites for their homes.[1] We mentioned there that it is considered to be morally wrong to refuse such a request if one has land to spare.[2] The rules of tenure are the same as for a bush-farm borrowed from a matrilateral kinsman. But if the house site and home farm have been continuously occupied by the same nuclear lineage for two or three generations, their ownership is considered to be entire. Their title rests not only on the passage of the generations but on the fact that they have begun to bury their dead there and to transmit the land in accordance with the rules of inheritance. Indeed, Tallensi say that only the person who originally granted the land can really recover it. Even his immediate heir could not compel the recipient to surrender the land. The latter could, if he wished, refuse to go. He would invoke the common ancestors of his hosts and himself and this would be sufficient—unless he had committed some particularly heinous breach of kinship amity against his hosts. Pa'anbobis furnishes a case in point. Many years ago, owing to a quarrel with his older half-brother he went to build his homestead on a bush-farm he had borrowed from his matrilateral kinsman and clansman Mambaŋya. There he lived for perhaps twenty years. Then Mambaŋya asked him to relinquish the land. He said his sons were growing up and wanted more land to cultivate. So Pa'anbobis went back to his original home. Both men understood and admitted in private that Mambaŋya's story was a polite

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 161, 221.
[2] Ibid., p. 163.

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pretext. The point was that he did not wish this land to be lost to his sons altogether; and he therefore took the precaution of getting it back in his own lifetime.

If a man gives land over which he has full rights of disposal to his own sister's son, this amounts to an outright gift. The land belongs to the sister's son and his heirs in perpetuity. This is always explained by the jural fiction that the *ahəb* (identifying himself with his sister) has, like a father, bestowed a portion of his own land on 'his child'. When the *ahəb* dies the *ahəŋ* has the same rights in respect of the share of the patrimonial land allocated to him as the *ahəb*'s own sons have in respect of any shares he might have given them. It is an application of the rule that siblings are equals. Barimoda and Kpelimɛrəme both had farms given to them on these terms by their mothers' brothers and both said they would never part with their farms. Wherever a branch of one clan is found settled on land coming under the ritual jurisdiction of a neighbouring clan, the origin of the relationship is traced back to such a gift of land. Thus Nəŋsuur yidem of Tongo occupy and own land under the ritual jurisdiction of the Zubiuŋ-Yakɔra Tɛndaana.[1] They ascribe their rights in their land and the fact that they are living on Zubiuŋ land to their founding ancestor's having been a true sister's son of the Zubiuŋ-Yakɔra Tɛndaana of his time. He was given a very large piece of land by the tɛndaana and came to live there. It is this land that his descendants now occupy.

The Status of an Ahəŋ as a Foster-child in his Ahəb's Family

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We have mentioned before that a boy who loses his own parents and cannot settle down with a proxy father sometimes goes to live with his mother's brother. A few cases of this sort are found in every settlement. As a rule the boy eventually goes back to his natal home to settle down there; occasionally he settles permanently in his mother's brother's settlement. In any case, he never loses touch with his natal home and never forfeits his rights and status in his own lineage and clan. He does not, as we know, become a member of the lineage or clan of his *ahəb*. This brings us back to the question of the jural relations of *ahəb* and *ahəŋ*.

A boy who grows up in his mother's brother's household is treated exactly like a son and is indistinguishable from a son of the family, to the outsider. Thus it was many months before I discovered that Puvolimra was not the Gbizug Tɛndaana's son but his sister's son. He was probably in his late twenties and had lived with the tɛndaana since boyhood. He continued to farm with the tɛndaana after the latter's oldest son had established his own household. He was, indeed, the tɛndaana's right-hand man, more trusted by him, in some ways, than

[1] *Cf. Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 59.

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his own sons. More surprising, Puvəlimra was admitted to all the esoteric rites of the Earth cult and often represented the tɛndaana in ritual activities. He was permitted to do this because he belonged to a lineage holding a tɛndaana-ship allied to that of Gbizug. Had he been a Namoo, he would have been excluded from all but the domestic religious rites of the tɛndaana.

He was a great favourite, too, with the tɛndaana's children. But one of the sons once made a revealing comment on Puvəlimra's position. He spoke in a slightly patronizing tone, though not offensively so. 'Puvəlimra', he said, 'is our child (*u a ti bii*). We like him to stay with us and we may not deny him anything. But one day he may decide to go home and we can't restrain him; or if he offends us we can tell him to go. He is not our person (as a member of the lineage is). However much the tɛndaana may like him he cannot inherit our ancestor shrines or our farms or our homestead. It is because he gets on so well with the tɛndaana that he stays.'

This comment is typical of conventional opinion on the position of an *ahəŋ* in the family of his *ahəb*. Puvəlimra himself, Gikoo-Duun, and Bayana, three young men who either lived or had lived with their mothers' brothers, defined their position in exactly the same terms. It would be an offence against the ancestors to deny an *ahəŋ* a home, but he has none of the fundamental rights of a son; his position depends on the personal attachment to him, and concern for him, of his mother's brother. An *ahəŋ* in Puvəlimra's position, it is sometimes suggested, is apt to be more compliant than a son, so as to ingratiate himself with his *ahəb*. He cannot make demands as of right, as a son may do. Said Gikoo-Duun: 'I was a small boy when I went to live with my *ahəb-soog* at Saamər (in Mampurugu). Later I went out on my own to build my homestead and farm for myself near him. It was not because of a quarrel. But my mother's brother will not take care of (i.e. take responsibility for) my affairs (*u ku maal n-ycla*). He will not marry a wife for me. If he does give me one cow to help pay my wife's bride-price and we should some day quarrel, he will say I must pay it back. He is not of my people. My people are here at Zubiuŋ. Even though I am far away, they (the Zubiuŋ people) will look after my affairs. If I were to die to-day they would make my funeral and inherit my things. Do you not see that I come here (to Zubiuŋ) regularly to sacrifice to my ancestors?'

As we know, one of the major jural responsibilities of a father for his son is in marriage affairs. Hence the fact that a sister's son has no claim, as of right, on his mother's brother's assistance in this important matter is a good test of their jural relations. Puvəlimra's marriage created the first rift between him and his mother's brother. The marriage was beset with difficulties. The girl's father feared that he would never get the bride-price as Puvəlimra's proxy father was a blind old man who lived

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on the charity of his kinsmen and friends. The Gbizug Tendaana refused to promise anything in advance. When at length Puvolimra succeeded in persuading his prospective father-in-law to give him the girl, all the formalities were carried out by his paternal relatives at Kpatia. Then came the question of bride-price. The demand was made to the head of Puvolimra's inner lineage at Kpatia, who transmitted it to Puvolimra himself, since his 'father' was obviously unable to meet it. It was then that the Gbizug Tendaana made Puvolimra a present of a bull, without, however, assuming any responsibility for handing it over to Puvolimra's father-in-law. The situation was saved for the time being; but that dry season Puvolimra went, for the first time in his life, to seek work abroad, hoping thus to earn enough to buy another bull to give to his in-laws.

Sometimes, however, a mother's brother accepts responsibility for the bride-price of the wife of his sister's son who has grown up as his foster-son. A curious situation arises then. For this amounts to adopting the *ahəŋ* into the inner lineage of the *ahəb*. It is as if his mother's bride-price is paid back to his paternal lineage so that he becomes a son of his mother's brother's lineage—much like an illegitimate son. And this is symbolically shown by his children being entrusted to the care of spirit guardians from among his mother's brother's ancestors instead of his paternal ancestors. Though he does not acquire rights of inheritance in his adoptive lineage, the *ahəŋ* settles permanently in the clan settlement of his *ahəb*. He retains only ritual ties with his paternal clan. This is one of the ways in which accessory lineages are founded in clans to which they are related as *ahəŋ* to *ahəb*. At Gbeog, for instance, there are two homesteads occupied by the sons and grandsons of a Gorogo man who came to live with his mother's brother and settled there when the latter paid the bride-price for his first wife. In ritual matters these men still belong to Gorogo. They keep the totemic taboos and funeral customs of Gorogo. When there is a death in their families their Gorogo clansmen come to bury the dead and celebrate the funeral. When the Great Festivals arrive they join with their Gorogo clansmen in celebrating them. But in another two or three generations it is quite possible that their lineage will become an established accessory lineage of Gbeog.

The corollary to the foregoing is that a person's patrilineal kin do not forfeit their rights over him merely because he has grown up in the care of his mother's brother. These rights are often jealously guarded. For example, Nabil, a lad who lived with his mother's brother, one day killed a hare. Instead of delivering the carcass to the head of his own nuclear lineage, as he was bound to do by custom, he brought it home to his *ahəb*. The latter divided the bulk of it amongst the constituent segments of his own inner lineage and sent only one hind-leg to Nabil's 'father'. His reaction was an indignant protest, backed by the other

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members of his inner lineage, at what he called the deliberate flouting of his rights as *biiraan*, owner of the child. A long squabble between the two lineages followed which eventually petered out in a compromise. This may seem a storm in a teacup; it was taken very seriously by a dozen Tale elders.

The outstanding example of the retention of patrilineal rights is found in the case of a girl who grows up at her *ahəb yiri*. Whatever her personal relations with her father's lineage may be, it is they who receive the placation gifts and the bride-price when she marries. The *ahəb*'s share is only the 'cow of rearing'.

Cases of girls living as foster children at their *ahəb yiri* up to marriageable age are uncommon. I knew of only one girl who was living with her *ahəb* and would probably not be taken back by her father's people before she reached marriageable age. A girl living with her mother's brother is usually there because she was sent to her maternal grandmother in early childhood owing to the death of her mother. She may be left there until she is 11 or 12, but she is then generally fetched by her father's people. A boy has more freedom. He cannot be forced to return to his paternal home if he does not wish to do so.

An interesting reflection of the conventional ideas on the relations of an *ahəb* and his foster *ahəŋ* is found in the story commonly told of how certain politico-ritual offices came to be transferred from one clan to another. The tale is so stereotyped that it can be regarded as a standard myth. It is alleged of several of the lesser chiefships that they were originally vested in different clans from those that now hold them—usually clans that are closely related to the present holders by local or ritual ties. The last chief of the original line, the myth relates, had his sister's son, a member of the clan now holding the chiefship, living with him. The chief put great trust in his *ahəŋ*; and, either because he had no sons or because his sons were indifferent to politico-ritual affairs, the chief always delegated his *ahəŋ* to represent him. Thus, he used to send the *ahəŋ* as his messenger whenever he had to communicate with the senior chief who was the elector to that chiefship. In this way the *ahəŋ* became known to the elector. When his *ahəb* died he hastened stealthily to the elector with the news, taking lavish gifts along with him. Knowing him so well from their previous contacts and persuaded by the rich gifts he brought, the elector thereupon immediately conferred the chiefship on him. Thus the chiefship came into the possession of its present holders. A similar story is told to explain the dominant position of the lineage of Lakum yiri in the politico-ritual structure of Ba'ari, in spite of their being an attached lineage.[1]

When it is pointed out that such actions are contrary to custom and would not be allowed at present, the natives have two answers. Firstly, they say, unscrupulous people never hesitate to break a customary rule

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 88.

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if it suits their purpose. Men have always been prepared to go to great lengths to win an office so coveted as that of a chief or tendaana. In addition, they argue, the breach of custom is not so outrageous as it seems. For the *ahoŋ* can claim that if his mother had been born a man he would have had an unquestionable right to the office.

This argument gains strength from the fact that in certain cases an *ahoŋ* or a sororal lineage is delegated to exercise rights vested in a particular office or lineage. Thus the people of Tongo maintain that in former times the Chief of Tongo always had the right to 'strip (*yɛa*)' all locust-bean trees in Tongo and the adjacent settlements, including Tenzugu. Now it would have been neither tactful nor dignified for the chief to send his wives or clansmen to strip locust-bean trees growing in another settlement. Therefore every chief delegated one of his 'sister's sons' in each settlement to harvest the pods for him. The *ahoŋ* was entitled to keep some of the locust-bean pods he harvested, but had to send the bulk to the Chief of Tongo. Tongo people say that the 'sisters' sons' gradually ceased sending the chief's share to him and took full possession of the trees, in much the same way as a man obtains *de facto* possession of land loaned to one of his ancestors by a matrilateral kinsman.

Certain powers normally held by tendaanas only are sometimes vested in lineages that do not have tendaanas. Thus at Tongo the people of Seug live on land that comes under the ritual jurisdiction of the Zoo Yiraaŋ.[1] But when they dig a new grave they do not send for the Yiraaŋ to come and 'mark out the grave (*kyɛbɔg voor*)' ritually, as they should do, according to the letter of custom. The head of one segment of Seug performs the rite instead. He keeps the carcass of the goat sacrificed, but sends the head and skin to the Zoo Yiraaŋ. This arrangement is found wherever people of one clan live on land that falls under the ritual jurisdiction of another clan. The regular explanation is that an ancestor of the lineage head who actually marks out the grave was an *ahoŋ* of the tendaana who had ritual jurisdiction over the land when the lineage first settled there, and that the tendaana delegated this ritual duty to him and his successors.

The Ahoŋ as Intermediary

By his genealogical position an *ahoŋ* forms a link between his father's lineage and his mother's lineage; and by extension this applies to every degree of matrilateral kinship. Hence an *ahoŋ* is always chosen as intermediary in all private jural and ritual transactions between a segment of one clan and a segment of another. Marriage is the most important of these transactions. A key role in all the jural and ritual formalities necessary for the conclusion of a marriage is that of the

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 169.

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pɔɣasama. As has been previously stated, he is a clansman of the bridegroom who is also an *ahɔŋ* of the bride's clan—*ahɔŋ* being understood to include any sororal kinsman of whatever degree. The reason for this choice was well put by a group of elders with whom I discussed this subject. 'He (the *pɔɣasama*) is our (the bridegroom's clan's) person and is also their (the bride's clan's) person. He may not deceive us nor may he deceive them. If he deceives either of us the ancestors will not permit it.'[1]

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The *pɔɣasama* appears in every transaction between the two parties to a marriage. He takes the placation gifts (*lu sɛndaan*) to the bride's father. When, later, the bride's father sends messengers (*duondɛm*) to demand the bride-price, the *pɔɣasama* conducts them to the person responsible for paying the bride-price and assists in the negotiations. Many a marriage is saved by the skill and patience of a *pɔɣasama* in persuading the bride's people and the bridegroom's people to a compromise on the question of bride-price payments. He must be present whenever bride-price payments are made; for if, at any subsequent time, a dispute should arise as to what was paid, his word is final. The *pɔɣasama* also acts as intermediary in all the formal claims, services, and duties that arise between the parties as a result of the marriage. He is the messenger who goes to announce the birth of her first child to the bride's parents. If a woman's father or mother dies, the *pɔɣasama* conducts the party sent by her husband with his obligatory food contributions to the funeral, and he hands these contributions over to his 'mother's brother's lineage (*ahɔb yidɛm*)'. In this and similar jural or ritual relations between the husband's people and the wife's people, the *pɔɣasama* has to be present both as a witness of the transaction and as a mediator, in case the recipients object to the quantity or quality of the food contributions or the payments offered. For though the obligations of the parties in such situations are clearly defined by custom, there is room for much quibbling over details. Custom declares that a man must kill and cook a goat or a sheep to send to his father-in-law's funeral at a certain stage. But one man will, out of generosity or as a special sign of respect, kill a large goat, whereas another will be mean and choose a puny animal. I have seen violent arguments arise between a son-in-law's messengers and his late father-in-law's lineage over a point of this sort. The mere presence of the *pɔɣasama*, even if he is but a young lad, has a conciliatory influence. As will be remembered, the *pɔɣasama*'s role does not come to an end on his death. It passes to his brothers and sons, like any other attribute of his social personality.

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There are other situations in which an *ahɔŋ* acts as intermediary between the members of his paternal clan and his matrilateral clan. For example, the setting up of a divining (*bakologo*) shrine for a man is done

[1] *'U a tam nit ka le'a bam nit; u ku too m-paah tam, u ku too m-paah bam-mi; ɔn paah ti ɔɔ kpiinam la ku sayi.'*

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for him by the lineage of the ancestress who has demanded the erection of the shrine. The diviner-to-be is himself a 'sister's son (*ahəŋ*)' or 'grandson (*yaaŋ*)' of the men who come to perform the ceremony of establishing the shrine. But in addition, a member of his clan who is also an *ahəŋ* of the visitors' clan is deputed to act as intermediary. He goes out to meet the visitors when they approach and escorts them to the homestead of the diviner-to-be; and he acts as spokesman for the latter throughout the ceremony. Thus he formally 'shows' (*paal*) the visitors the beer and the fowls and the goat that have been provided for the ceremony and acts as mediator if there is a disagreement about the amount or quality of these provisions. In the ritual situations that make up the ceremony the visitors sit together in a group and the diviner-to-be and his clansmen sit together in a group. Between the two groups sits the selected *ahəŋ*. As is customary in all such situations, the two parties do not address one another directly. They address the intermediary, who 'passes on (*zaŋ ti*)' what was said to the other party.

Similarly, if a dispute occurs between segments of different clans, for instance over the abduction of a wife, the injured group might send one of their members who is a 'sister's son' of the abductor's clan, with a message of protest and a demand for the return of the wife. An *ahəŋ* is the appropriate person to act as go-between in negotiations between different clans. In the system of clanship ties, it will be remembered, intercalary lineages are sometimes credited with being the agnates of one clan and the 'sister's sons' of the other.[1]

As has been suggested, Tallensi maintain that an *ahəŋ* acting as an intermediary in inter-clan transactions is bound to be equally faithful to both parties. This does not mean that an *ahəŋ* is always equally loyal in sentiment to both his patrilineal and his matrilateral—especially his immediate maternal—kin. Tallensi say that when there is a clash of interests a man will always side with his patrilineal kin while endeavouring, if possible, to refrain from bringing harm on his maternal kin. The behaviour of an *ahəŋ* in war between his and his mother's brother's clan is a case in point.

But there is a belief which suggests that the loyalty of an *ahəŋ* to his mother's brother's lineage may, in some circumstances, outweigh his loyalty to his own clan. In the old days of warfare, it is said, if a man was killed in fighting, there was a way of taking vengeance on the slayer by means of sorcery. The arrow that slew the victim was extracted, and the clan and lineage of the slayer were ascertained. This was easy. Every inner or medial lineage of a clan usually has a distinctive mark (*daan*). One lineage, for example, may tie a tiny guinea-fowl feather at the base of the arrow-head, another may use a particular species of grass. By inquiring from their sororal kinsmen in the enemy clan the victim's lineage brothers soon discovered which lineage the slayer

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 44 ff.

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belonged to and who he was. The method of sorcery was to dip this 'evil arrow (*peembier*)' secretly into some food or drink the slayer was about to take. If this was done he would die. The problem then was to find someone who would carry out this task. It could not be done by any of the victim's clansmen since it required intimate contact with the slayer's family.

If there was a daughter of the victim's clan, or better still, inner lineage married to a member of the slayer's inner lineage, she might be persuaded to do it. Such an action would be a grave sin, for which the woman's husband's ancestors would punish her with death. But sometimes women hate their husbands so much in their hearts, Tallensi say, that they will risk anything to injure them and their clan. And if the dead man was a close agnate of the woman, she might put vengeance for his death above her duty to her husband's clan. Alternatively, an *ahəŋ* of the victim's inner lineage or clan, who is a member of the slayer's inner lineage or clan, might be persuaded to undertake the commission. Only a man who had a deep grudge against the slayer would undertake so wicked an action for which the clan ancestors would certainly punish him with death. But enmity between clansmen, even between brothers of the same inner lineage, is not unknown; and as Tallensi often assert, the belief that the ancestors may punish an action with death does not always restrain an unscrupulous man. Whether or not this act of sorcery was ever carried out I cannot tell. It is impossible to obtain verifiable information on a point of this sort. But what is of interest is the belief itself. Assuming that it is founded on fantasy, it still suggests that the loyalties of an *ahəŋ* are felt to be more evenly divided than is conventionally admitted.

There is other evidence for this view. The Gəlibdaana of Tɛnzugu earned the hostility of most of the maximal lineage and clan heads of the Tongo district by his high-handed drive to aggrandize himself.[1] In public his opponents had the support of practically all their clan or lineage elders. But amongst them there were, in every clan, one or two private sympathizers of the Gəlibdaana. The usual explanation was that these men were 'sisters' sons' or 'grandsons' of his inner lineage or clan. One of the Chief of Tongo's most trusted and devoted elders used to visit the Gəlibdaana regularly. Another elder of the chief pointed out to me, in explanation, that the first was an *ahəŋ* of the Gəlibdaana's inner lineage. He quoted several other men who were *ahəs* of the Gəlibdaana's inner lineage and maintained close contact with him. It was through them, he added, that the Gəlibdaana kept himself so well informed of everything that happened at Tongo, even of matters that should not be known outside the chief's family. He admitted that the Chief of Tongo probably had similar contacts with the Gəlibdaana's faction and kept himself informed of the Gəlibdaana's activities in the same way.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 251 ff.

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The Ritual Relations of Matrilateral and Sororal Kin

We have previously observed that the distinguishing attribute of an *ahɔb* in Tale thought is that he sacrifices on behalf of his *ahɔŋ*; and *ahɔŋ* in this context includes all sororal kin, both those who are strictly *ahɔs* and those who are strictly *yaas*. This is an indication of the importance attached to the ritual relations of extra-clan kin.

As with all the social relations of mother's brother and sister's son, their ritual relations vary in frequency and degree according to their genealogical distance. Thus a male *ahɔŋ* is obliged to send a ready cooked fowl to be 'set out (*zien*)' in commemoration of his *ahɔb* when the latter's funeral is being celebrated. A child of 3 or 4 will have the fowl sent in his name by his parents; a man of substance might, as a special gesture of affection and respect, send a sheep instead of a fowl. No *ahɔŋ* would fail in this duty where his true mother's brother is concerned. I have known men who were small children when a mother's brother died, and whose parents omitted to send fowls to the funeral in their name, make up for it years later on the occasion of a funeral in the family of their *ahɔb*. Not infrequently, men will voluntarily send a fowl or a sheep as a tribute to the funeral of a father's mother's brother. But it is exceptional for such a tribute to be offered at the funeral of a more remote 'mother's brother'.

When a man sacrifices to an ancestor spirit, any descendant of that ancestor has the right to be present and to share in the sacrament. The only exceptions are the cult of the clan or maximal lineage *bɔŋar* and, among the real Talis, the cult of the Earth and of the External *Bɔŋar*. It would be incompatible with the functions of these cults as foci of social integration on the highest level of corporate structure to allow non-members of the lineage concerned to take part in them. But an *ahɔŋ* may attend domestic sacrifices to any of his matrilateral ancestors and sacrifices to the founding ancestor's shrine (*bɔŋar*) of the lineage of his true or classificatory mother's brother.

If a man proposes to make a sacrifice to one of his immediate antecedents (say, his father or grandfather), and if he is going to sacrifice anything larger than a fowl or guinea-fowl (say, a goat or a sheep or a cow), he is in duty bound to inform his sisters. He is not bound to tell his deceased sister's sons, but he generally does so, particularly if it is so important a sacrifice as a cow. A cow is seldom sacrificed to a shrine of lesser standing than a lineage *bɔŋar*. Hence when such a sacrifice is planned, the man who is making it should, in theory, inform all the sororal descendants of the lineage. He does not actually do so; he informs his own sisters' sons and his father's sisters' sons and leaves it to the other members of the lineage (who will, of course, automatically be present) to inform their close *ahɔs* if they wish to. But news of such a sacrifice travels fast owing to the complex interweaving of kinship ties,

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and few people who have an interest in it escape hearing of it in advance. It is the same with funerals. Close extra-clan kin of the dead are informed, distant extra-clan kin, unless there is some special reason for sending them a message, find out indirectly.

An *ahəŋ* is not obliged to attend a sacrifice at his mother's brother's house (*ahəb yiri*); but if it is an important sacrifice, or if it is being made by his own mother's brother, he generally makes an effort to be present. Again, an *ahəŋ* whose home is near to that of his *ahəb* will be more likely to come than one who lives farther away. Thus, as has been recorded, Barimoda seldom missed a sacrifice at his true mother's brother's homestead which was very close to his own. Yinworəb, on the other hand, did not attend a single sacrifice at his mother's brother's house at Yinduuri during the year he was with me. It must not be thought, though, that a sacrifice at one's *ahəb yiri* is considered to be of no consequence. Tallensi say they would always go if they could, for their matrilateral ancestors have powers of blessing only little less than their agnatic ancestors; but it is not compulsory when the sister's son is not himself bringing the sacrifice. As every man has shrines consecrated to those of his matrilateral ancestors who have revealed themselves as directly concerned with his life, in his own home, he generally attends sacrifices at their lineage home only on special occasions or when they command him to offer sacrifice there.[1]

Thus when a man performs a private sacrifice in his own home a close sister's son or two may be present; it would be most unusual to find an *ahəŋ* more distant than a father's sister's son present. But in the majority of such private sacrifices, judging from the several score I have witnessed, sisters' sons are not in attendance. When, however, a cow is sacrificed to a lineage *bəɣar*, there are always *ahəs* present; perhaps only one, perhaps half a dozen, including both near and distant sisters' sons.

As we have mentioned before, the right of a sister's son to be present at ritual ceremonies at his mother's brother's house is recognized by the allocation to him of a prescribed share of the sacrificial meat. He receives the neck of every animal sacrificed. One of the lighter moments at the end of a major sacrifice is the good-humoured wrangling of a group of

[1] We are here touching on one of the most complex features of Tale religious custom. The shrines consecrated to a man's matrilateral ancestors in his own homestead provide him with an indirect route to them. When he sacrifices to them on these shrines, he is, as it were, approaching them through an intermediary spirit or group of spirits. He is never able to approach them directly. Only their agnatic descendants can do that. Generally a matrilateral ancestor spirit (male or female) who has a shrine consecrated to him or her by a daughter's son or descendant demands sacrifices on that shrine. But there are many occasions on which the spirit-demands that the sacrifice be offered to him or her directly on the shrine consecrated to him or her at a son's or agnatic descendant's house. It is on such occasions that the 'sister's son' or 'grandson' has to take the animal he has been commanded to offer to the homestead of his 'mother's brother' or 'grandfather'. See below, p. 324.

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ahɔs, representing perhaps five or six clans, over the division of the cow's neck amongst themselves. It is on such occasions that the *ahɔs* divide into two groups, the *dugni ahɔs*, who are sisters' sons of the inner lineage responsible for the ceremony, and the *yeyha* (outside) *ahɔs*, whose matrilateral links are with other segments of the clan. Etiquette dictates that the choicest and largest part of the meat apportioned to the *ahɔs* should be given to the 'outside *ahɔs*'. The *dugni ahɔs*, it is argued, have many more opportunities of attending ceremonies of this inner lineage and receiving their shares of the sacrificial meat.

There are certain ceremonial occasions on which sisters' children of all degrees usually turn up in large numbers.[1] They include not only *ahɔs* of the lineage immediately responsible for the ceremony but also remote *ahɔs* and 'grandsons (*yaas*)' of the clan. The death of a senior elder or of the holder of a politico-ritual office brings 'sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' from a wide range to the funeral. They are present at all stages of the funeral, but the largest number usually come on the day of the burial, on the day the funeral proper (as opposed to the burial rites) commences, and on the two occasions when a diviner is consulted to ascertain the mystical author of the death. These are all occasions when animals are slaughtered as offerings and tributes to the dead, or else food or beer is used in the rites and shared amongst all present. The meat and the drink form a big attraction to all who have kinship ties with the lineage celebrating the funeral. It is no mean attraction either, considering that at a big funeral, such as that of the head of a section (*yisug*) of a clan or of a maximal lineage, two or three big beasts (cows and donkeys) and from twenty to forty small stock (sheep and goats) will be slaughtered, not to speak of innumerable fowls. In addition there will be great quantities of porridge and other cooked food. And *ahɔs* have prescribed shares of all these items. Similar prodigality is shown in the brewing of beer for a big funeral.

But greed is far from being the chief motive that brings matrilateral and sororal kin to an important funeral. The profusion of food and beer—both of which are distributed only on specific ritual occasions—serves chiefly to create and maintain the right atmosphere of pride and kinship amity. For it must be remembered that most of the 'sisters' sons' will bring a gift, if it is only a meagre chicken and a small basket of grain; and if there are twenty or thirty 'sisters' sons' present the share of meat and beer each will receive is of less value than the things he brings.

A 'sister's son' or a 'grandson', like everybody else who attends such

[1] As these ceremonies are almost always conducted by men and belong to the ritual and jural spheres of activity dominated by the men, the *ahɔs* who come are principally males; but often one or two female *ahɔs* come as well. The neck of the animal sacrificed belongs in theory to the *ahɔs* of both sexes, but I have never seen it given to a woman.

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604 funerals, comes because of the social importance of the occasion. The
764 funeral of a section or maximal lineage head is of exceptional public
571 interest. It marks the end of a phase of lineage history and the beginning of a new phase, involving realinements in the social relations of many people and probably of all segments of the clan. That is why every branch of the dead man's clan, representatives of related clans, and many matrilateral and sororal kinsmen come to take part in the funeral.

63 For similar reasons the ceremony by which the *bɔyar* of a lineage of
571 a high order, such as a medial lineage or a maximal lineage, is formally
602 taken over—'inherited (*vaa*)', as the natives put it—by a new lineage
782 head is also attended by many 'sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' of the lineage and the clan. This ceremony marks the re-establishment of the structural equilibrium of the lineage around a new lineage head after its temporary disturbance by the death of the previous lineage head. It is an event of special importance for reaffirming the bonds of lineage solidarity and of kinship amity—for renewing, in the presence of their founding ancestors, the covenants of clanship and of kinship. All the males of the lineage, including the small boys, and representatives of all the other segments of the clan attend, and extra-clan kinsfolk from far and wide are present. I have counted as many as thirty, ranging from the full sister's son of the new lineage head to a distant 'sister's son', whose matrilateral ties with the clan went back to the founding ancestor of his maximal lineage, at such a gathering. Though it is a festive occasion, the attraction of food and drink is unquestionably of minor significance. Only two or three sheep, at most, are sacrificed, in addition to a large number of fowls; but every adult who attends is expected to bring a fowl to be offered to the *bɔyar* on his behalf. 'Sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' take special pride in offering their fowls, for this is the essence of the sacrament. An atmosphere of great goodwill and fellowship prevails, suffusing the most solemn moments of the sacrifice itself.

793 It is very much the same with the installation ceremonies of a newly
602 appointed tendaana or other holder of a politico-ritual office. Extra-clan kin, clansmen, representatives of linked clans and of ritually associated clans, all come in great numbers to the ceremonies, bringing fowls, dishes of cooked food, baskets of grain and of ground-nuts, and other voluntary gifts to congratulate the new chief or tendaana and to testify to their kinship bonds with him and his clan. These ceremonies are, in effect, simply an elaboration of the ceremony of 'inheriting' a lineage *bɔyar*. Their significance is the same, but in a heightened degree, corresponding with the wider social sphere to which they refer. 'Sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' closely related to the new chief or tendaana are as proud of his elevation in status as are his close agnates.

604 This is one aspect of a man's ritual relations with his 'sisters' sons'
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and 'grandsons'. There is another, and in some ways more important, aspect. Every man sacrifices to both his agnatic ancestors and his maternal ancestors, as we have seen. He has shrines consecrated to ancestors of both lines in his homestead. The ancestors who constitute his *Yin* are very often matrilateral or include matrilateral ancestors. Indeed this is so common that a *Yin* that has no matrilateral ancestors is somewhat unusual. Knowing the significance of the *Yin* shrine as a symbol of a man's individuality, we can see why his connexion with his mother's side is apt to be stressed in it. Again, every man erects a shrine to his mother when she dies, which in the course of time may develop into a very important shrine for him. There are other shrines, too, which are consecrated to matrilateral ancestors. The most important of these are divining shrines (*bakologo*) and *bɔɣar* shrines.

A *bakologo* shrine is, by definition, a 'female (*bumpɔk*)' shrine. That is to say, the ancestors associated with it come, by definition, from a matrilateral lineage of the diviner; and the dominant figure among them is usually a woman, a 'mother'. It is a point of striking significance in the social psychology of the Tallensi that the spirits through whom a diviner makes contact with the ancestors of his clients should constitute a 'feminine' group,[1] the more so when the character of the *bakologo* complex is understood. The *bakologo*[2] is the very incarnation of the vindictive and jealous aspect of the ancestors. It persecutes the man in whose life it has intervened relentlessly, until he finally submits and 'accepts (*die*)' it—that is, until he undertakes to set up a shrine to the *bakologo* spirits in his own home so that he can sacrifice to them regularly. He then promises, also, to use the shrine for divining. But not every man has a talent for divining, so most men simply have the shrine and do not use it for divination. It is interesting to note that nine out of ten men over 40 have *bakologo* shrines. Every man, and not only those who have suffered exceptional misfortunes, is directed by the religious system of the Tallensi to project his deeper feelings of guilt and insecurity largely on to the mother image embodied in the *bakologo* complex. Usually, also, a man does not immediately yield to the demands of the *bakologo* ancestors. He temporizes, evades, and resists, perhaps for years, until he is at last forced to submit and accept the *bakologo*. This 'cools (*maa*)' or subdues the *bakologo*. By giving the spirits a home in his own house, where they can be cared for, their victim transforms their hate into love. They may still inflict misfortunes on him, but he has a means of placating them since he can sacrifice to the shrine. In return for the sacrifices they

[1] Cf. what was said on p. 235 above about the cruelty attributed to female ancestor spirits.

[2] As with all religious terms of this class among the Tallensi, *bakologo* is used both for the shrine (*baɣər*)—the tall, conical object built of mud and smeared with the dried blood and feathers of sacrifices—and for the group of ancestors to whom the shrine is dedicated. It signifies also the whole configuration of ideas and beliefs associated with the shrine.

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602 789 to do this service because, as a kinsman of the sufferer, he naturally wishes to see him free of his evil fate. He is held to desire this the more strongly because his *ahəb* sacrifices on his behalf. Hence his welfare depends on the continued life and the perpetuation of the lineage of the *ahəb*, both of which are threatened by the evil Predestiny. Lastly, he is specially suitable because a complete stranger might use the opportunity to do the sufferer magical harm, while a patrilineal kinsman of his might be contaminated by the evil Predestiny. Again, anybody who can be identified as an *ahəŋ*, in however remote a classificatory sense, may be asked to perform this service.

The Father's Sister

604 We have left the discussion of the relationship of father's sister (*ba-pɔk*) and brother's child (*bii*) for this chapter, although it is not a relationship of extra-clan kinship. Father's sister and brother's child are members of the same clan and lineage. But Tallensi associate the father's sister with relatives outside the clan. This is due to her marrying out of the clan, to her having no significant public voice in the affairs of the lineage, and to her being unable to inherit lineage property or ancestor shrines.[1] Thus a native usually compares his relationship with his father's sister to his relationship with his mother's brother, not to his relationship with his parents. It is thought of more as the opposite of the relationship between sister's son and mother's brother than as an item in the scheme of intra-familial or intra-lineage relationships.

As in the case of mother's brother and sister's child, the bond between father's sister and brother's child tends to be more effective for brother's sons than for brother's daughters. In the case of the brother's sons it is reinforced by the ties a woman has with her paternal lineage and by the ties her children have with their mother's brother and his sons. In the case of brother's daughters, it is attenuated because the daughters tend to be dispersed by marriage and their relationship with their father's sister is much more a purely personal affair.

Compared with the mother's brother, the father's sister (*ba-pɔk*) counts for little in the web of extra-clan kinship. Tallensi say this is because she is a woman. 'It is not she who sacrifices for you but you (her brother's son) may one day sacrifice on her behalf.' At the same time they declare that 'she is your father'. I have several times had an old woman introduced to me by a man or a woman as 'my father'. Enwala, explaining her affection for her full brother's son, Anaaho, said in the stock phraseology, 'Is he not my child? If you and your brother together have a child, is he not also your child [as much as your brother's]?

[1] Except, as has been mentioned before if she is the last surviving member of the lineage. Even then she does not inherit the ancestor shrines but merely sacrifices to them, as if she were acting on behalf of her deceased father. She can never inherit lineage land.

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(*Pa m-biiga? Nyɛn ni i tau n-kab dɔŋa bii, pa nyɛnmi biig n-a u?*)'. As will be remembered, men quote the same maxim when they are asked why mother's brother and sister's son are generally so attached to each other. In support of this Tallensi usually quote two customs. Firstly, when an old woman dies, the oldest of her brothers' sons has his head shaved in mourning, as if for his father. He represents all his siblings, Tallensi say, in this act of filial respect. Secondly, a *ba-pɔk* has the power of pronouncing a curse against a child of her brother. She can, conversely, withdraw a curse pronounced by her brother if he dies without having done so, and if he has no surviving brother of the same nuclear lineage. But the social equivalence of a woman with her brother in relation to his children is limited by her sex. She is barred from exercising the jural and ritual authority and the rights of a father. In fact, the tendency is for her to look up to her brother's son as the future heir of her brother and the potential repository of authority in the affairs of her lineage.

Two examples will suffice to show how limited in fact are the jural rights a woman has in relation to her brother's children. They have principally a token value. When a funeral is being celebrated by a woman's husband's nuclear lineage her close lineage kin send a party of mourners to bear their condolences to the lineage of their lineage-in-laws. The party includes a number of young girls whom the woman calls her sisters and daughters. Before they leave again for home these young girls are gathered together and surrounded by a crowd of young men of the host clan. Amid laughter and good-humoured teasing the girls are invited to choose a 'future husband' each from among the young men. It is all a game, part of the hospitality accorded to the visitors. The selected 'husband' has to give a parting gift to the girl who has chosen him, so that she shall go home pleased with her visit. Among these girls might be a daughter of one of the woman's brothers of the same nuclear lineage. If the woman is particularly interested in the young man this girl selects, she may declare publicly that she is giving him the girl as his wife. Everybody pretends to accept this declaration as if it came from the girl's father, but in fact everybody knows that it has only a token significance and no jural force whatever.

Again, if a woman deserts a husband to whom she has been given by her father without having previously arranged to go to another man, she very often takes refuge with a *ba-pɔk*. There she is, so to speak, under a parent's protection but not subject to her father's authority. She knows that her *ba-pɔk* will sympathize with her and cannot in any case force her to return to the man she has left. Her father, satisfied that she is in parental care, will not seek to put pressure on her, at least for some time. However, a girl in this position soon attracts suitors, though courtship has to be clandestine, for she is still formally the wife of another man. But sometimes a suitor succeeds in ingratiating himself with the *ba-pɔk* and persuades her to connive at an elopement, a thing

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604 which a father would never do. In theory, this means that the *ba-pɔk* consents to the new marriage. In practice, her action has no binding force on her brother. This rule applies also to an unmarried girl who is given in marriage by her *ba-pɔk*. A woman might have one of her brother's daughters living with her as a nursemaid for her baby. She might promise the girl as a wife to one of her husband's brothers. But her brother need not consider himself bound by this promise if he has objections to the marriage.

604 A father's sister is, in short, a kind of female 'father', but without the jural and ritual attributes of fatherhood. A father's sister must be treated with respect. It would be grossly improper, for example, to joke with her as one jokes with a wife's sister; and to strike or abuse her, even if she were much younger than oneself, would be a sin. But the respect accorded to her is only a pale reflection of the attitude implicit in filial piety. It is much more a matter of etiquette than of emotion, as if it were merely conventional and not evoked by a feeling of moral obligation.

604 A marked characteristic of a person's relations with his or her father's sister is the absence of specific mutual obligations. Just as a *ba-pɔk* has in reality no rights over her brother's children, so she has no specific duties of either a ritual or a secular kind towards them, or they to her. This is the chief contrast between this relationship and that of parent and child or that of mother's brother and sister's child. Only a shadow of a ritual sanction comes into the relationship, in the form of the belief that the curse of a *ba-pɔk* can harm her brother's child, and in the notion that she stands under the protection of the same ancestors as the latter. Hence, though she cannot demand services from her brother's child, it is felt that a request for help from her should be met, even at the cost of some inconvenience. If a person offends his father's sister and she reproaches him saying, 'I bore you (identifying herself with her brother) and this is how you treat me. My ancestors have seen it, my fathers have seen it (*Man dɔyi la k-i cyɔm lá ŋwala; n-yaanam nyeya, m-banam nyeya*)', this has the force of a curse because she is invoking her ancestors who are also his ancestors. Such a curse would disturb a native, but not nearly so deeply as a father's curse or if a mother's brother refused to sacrifice on his behalf.

Because their relationship is devoid of a definite jural coefficient and is not subject to organized ritual sanctions; because, also, a father's sister stands outside the scheme of economic and domestic associations in which the relationship of parent and child is set, the relations of father's sister and brother's child are free of the undercurrent of tension found in those of father and child. A woman's bonds with her brother's children are fundamentally bonds of sentiment. That is why they seldom endure beyond one generation, or extend beyond the nuclear lineage.

The personal relations of father's sister and brother's child have much

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in common with those of mother's brother and sister's child. They are similarly influenced by the closeness of the sibling tie between the brother and the sister, as is to be expected. There is this difference, however, that the contacts between *ba-pɔk* and brother's child are chiefly maintained by the *ba-pɔk*'s visits to her parental home, and not by the brother's child's being taken, or going on visits to her. They are largely a by-product of the woman's contacts with her parental home, and they diminish as she grows older. A man has no occasion to visit his *ba-pɔk* regularly, and a woman is apt to do so only if she lives near her. Opportunity and disposition count for more than in the personal relations of true mother's brother and sister's child. Thus a *ba-pɔk* sometimes has a brother's child to live with her, but this is rarer than for children to stay with an *ahəb*, and there is usually a utilitarian motive on the side of the *ba-pɔk*. Ɔmara's sister had their late brother's two sons staying with her for two or three years each, in succession. She had them to stay with her so that they could look after her son's horse, and they went home again as soon as they were big enough to farm. If a girl stays with a *ba-pɔk* it is almost always as a nursemaid to her baby. A boy does not go to live with a *ba-pɔk* and grow up in her household, as he might with an *ahəb*. There is an obvious reason for all this. A *ba-pɔk* does not 'own' her household as an *ahəb* does. She cannot have her brother's child living with her except with her husband's consent; and though he would, out of consideration for her, not withhold his consent, he might demur against the burden of supporting another man's child, who is no kin of his, for a long time. A woman cannot give her brother's son a place in the household economy as an *ahəb* can to his sister's son.

With these limitations, the personal relations of father's sister and brother's child are often extremely cordial. Anaaho was a constant visitor to his father's sister's house when he was working near where she lived. He often went there for meals and sought her advice about his affairs. Da'amo'o was welcomed with open arms by his *ba-pɔk* when he travelled with me to her husband's clan settlement. She gave him some presents for his wife who had just had a baby and got permission from her husband for him to take away a large log of a tree that had fallen down near their homestead. A *ba-pɔk* shows her interest in her brother's children by giving or sending them gifts. A person visiting his or her *ba-pɔk* seldom leaves without some such token of her interest and affection. It may be a chicken or a few pence for a nephew, or a basket of shea nuts, a dish of dried vegetables, or a new back-flap to wear at the next festival dance for a niece. The death of her brother's child, especially of a young adult son or daughter, is often a great shock to a *ba-pɔk*. A *ba-pɔk*'s death, on the other hand, seldom grieves her brother's children as much as the death of a favourite *ahəb*, and they have no formal obligations to attend the funeral with prescribed gifts, or to undergo mourning rites other than the head-shaving of the eldest son.

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●604 Our discussion has been concerned with the relationship of a person to his or her own father's sister, and we have noted that the bonds of sentiment between father's sister and brother's child seldom extend beyond the nuclear lineage of the latter. A person recognizes the sister of any man in the inner lineage or medial lineage whom he calls 'father' as his *ba-pɔk*. But whereas a woman has a strong personal interest in and often affection for her full or half-brother's children, and generally also takes a personal interest in her father's brothers' sons' children, the tendency is for the relationship to become more formal beyond that range. This is largely due to the fact that contacts between a woman and the children of her distant brothers of the same inner or medial lineage are usually rare, as compared with her contacts with children of her own nuclear lineage. But the appropriate norms of behaviour hold to the limits of the range of recognized generation differences and may be evoked in suitable circumstances. Beyond the range of the inner, or at most medial lineage, a woman of a person's father's generation is not recognized as a *ba-pɔk*, but is described as a 'sister' (*tau*) and thus classed with all the non-specifically related clanswomen.

603 604 A woman calls her brothers' children's children her grandchildren (*yaas*), and she may be very fond of them, if she has opportunities of seeing them often. Gɛlima, a childless old widow who had come to live out the last few years of her life at her oldest brother's house, was often teased good-humouredly by her brothers and brothers' sons because of her attachment to the latter's small children. In theory the joking relationship holds for grandchild and grandfather's sister. In practice it is modified by the tendency to class together father's sisters and agnatic grandfather's sisters, who are usually described by the term *ba-pɔk* or its equivalent *pugərəba*. A person identifies himself (or herself) with his father in relation to the latter's father's sister, not only on account of the dominance of the lineage principle, but also, and mainly, because he does so in relation to the woman's husband and children. He thinks of the woman's husband as an 'in-law (*deema*)' and of her children as *ahɔs*. And this is facilitated by residential separation and the identification of an old woman with the affairs and interests of her husband's lineage and clan. Thus cases like that of Gɛlima are the exception. The majority of old women see so little of their brothers' grandchildren that their relationship with them is purely formal and perfunctory.